IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHRISTINE LANE	;
1475 Rupert Road	:
Pottstown, PA 19464	:
Plaintiff,	: CIVIL ACTION :
V.	: No
ELIZABETH SNYDER	; ;
1012 E. Philadelphia Avenue	: JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
Gilbertsville, PA 19525	:
and	:
MAIN STREET FINANCIAL	:
PARTNERS, LLC	:
1012 E. Philadelphia Avenue	:
Gilbertsville, PA 19525	:
and	:
ELIZABETH SNYDER REAL	:
ESTATE, LLC	:
7605 Hillview Circle	:
Coopersburg, PA 18036	:
	:
Defendants.	:
	:

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This action has been initiated by Christine Lane (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff," unless indicated otherwise) for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA" - 29 U.S.C. 201, et. seq.) and applicable state law(s). Plaintiff asserts herein that she was not paid wages or overtime compensation in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and that her retaliatory termination promptly followed complaints of such illegality. As a direct consequence of Defendants' actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. 1331, has jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims because they arise under a federal law the FLSA. There is supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state-law claims herein because they arise out of the same common nucleus of operative facts as Plaintiff's federal claim(s) set forth in this lawsuit.
- 3. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants' contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendants to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in International Shoe Co. v. Washington, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because all of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district.

III. PARTIES

- 5. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 6. Plaintiff is an adult individual, with an address as set forth in the caption.
- 7. Defendant Main Street Financial Partners, LLC (hereinafter "Defendant MSFP") is a brokerage focusing in selling and providing financial and insurance products and/or advice to the general public, retirement planning and Medicare coordination. This entity operates at the above-captioned address in Pennsylvania.

- 8. Defendant Elizabeth Snyder Real Estate, LLC (hereinafter "Defendant ESRE") is a company registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at the above-captioned address and an entity engaging in the sale of real estate.
- 9. Elizabeth Snyder (hereinafter "Defendant Snyder") is the owner, primary shareholder, and high-level operations manager (and President) of Defendants MSFP and ESRE.
- 10. At all times relevant herein, Defendants acted by and through their agents, servants and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for Defendants.

IV. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 11. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 12. Plaintiff became employed with Defendants on or about June 11, 2018. In total, Plaintiff was employed with Defendants for approximately 3 months, through on or about September 10, 2018.
- 13. There phrase "became employed with Defendants" is used herein because upon hire and through termination, Plaintiff performed work for anything Defendant Snyder desired, requested or needed related to anything she did to generate money (including for any of her businesses). By way of further clarification:
 - (A) Plaintiff was informed upon hire by Defendant Snyder she would be assisting with all types of financial or brokerage work within Defendant MSFP, which operated within 2 separate locations (Gilbertsville and Bethlehem);
 - (B) Plaintiff processed miscellaneous paperwork, helped organize the office, sent and received documents, and generally processed information for Defendant MSFP related to income generation and production for all types of insurance sales products;

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- (C) Plaintiff was also regularly directed to help process paperwork and coordinate matters for Defendant Snyder's real-estate operations, sales and showings; and
- (D) Plaintiff was used as personal assistant in many ways by being sent on personal errands whenever requested by Defendant Snyder.
- 14. Although Plaintiff performed a hybrid role consisting of duties which included but were not limited to sales, secretary, receptionist, office coordination, and personal assistant, she was *only paid* through Defendant MSFP for all of her work and compensation (despite consistently working for Defendant Snyder and all of her business interests).
- 15. Plaintiff was paid by Defendants on a bi-weekly basis, every 2 weeks. Plaintiff was paid hourly, her pay would fluctuate during pay periods, and she was never paid a set salary. See e.g. 4 Pay Stubs, attached collectively hereto as "Exhibit A" (illustrating pay fluctuated each week).
- 16. Plaintiff was paid at a rate of \$14.00 per hour through her employment with Defendants, also identified under "RATE" in Plaintiff's paystubs. See "Exhibit A."
- 17. There is no applicable state or federal overtime exemption from overtime pay entitlements which would apply to Plaintiff for 2 reasons. First, she didn't have primary duties which would make her exempt. Second, she was paid hourly which *automatically bars* the applicability of any potential exemption. Thus, it could not be disputed that Plaintiff was at all times during her employment *a non-exempt employee*.
- 18. Despite Plaintiff being obviously non-exempt and entitled to overtime, Defendants simply *refused* to pay Plaintiff overtime compensation. A review of "Exhibit A" attached hereto shows that in pay periods wherein Plaintiff regularly worked overtime, she was still paid at the same hourly rate of \$14.00 per hour for any overtime worked *instead of* \$21.00 per hour.

- 19. For example, in the paystub (as part of Exhibit A) for "pay period" 7/22/18 8/4/08, Plaintiff worked 97 hours (17 hours of overtime). Plaintiff's gross pay for the pay period was \$1358.00, which divisibly by \$14.00 is 97 (the exact amount of hours Plaintiff was identified as having worked that period). This illustrates Plaintiff was **never** paid at a rate of time and one half of her normal hourly rate for hours in excess of 40 per week.
- 20. Plaintiff was only paid at her regular hourly pay rate for each and every worked despite consistently averaging 5-10 hours of overtime per week, also commonly known or referred to as only paying employees "straight time" for overtime hours.
 - 21. Defendants were aware of their overtime obligations because *inter alia*:
 - (A) Plaintiff specifically expressed concerns of non-receipt of full overtime compensation on multiple occasions. Defendant Snyder conceded knowing of the obligation but defended she would make it up to Plaintiff in other ways financially going forward.
 - (B) Defendant Snyder, an owner and operator of multiple businesses, is sophisticated and despite it being common knowledge that overtime is paid to hourly employees - she also is very business savvy and knew specifically of her obligations while refusing to do so.
 - (C) Defendant Snyder issued payroll directly from her own business and intentionally omitted from her pay stubs any reference to "overtime" and instead included all hours as regular pay. See Exhibit A.
 - (D) Defendant Snyder had printouts of specific time worked by Plaintiff wherein the automated printouts specifically delineated Plaintiff's overtime hours as "OT." See e.g. "Exhibit B." But Defendant Snyder concealed the OT worked in actual paystubs and still refused to compensate Plaintiff any differently despite seeing each payroll period that Plaintiff worked overtime hours.

- 22. Defendants' actions clearly did not demonstrate good-faith compliance with the FLSA, which is why liquidated (double) damages are "automatically" warranted. ¹
- 23. In the last month of her employment, Plaintiff engaged in protected activity by expressing concerns of non-compliance with overtime law(s) to Defendant Snyder.
- 24. Instead of addressing Plaintiff's concerns as aforesaid, Plaintiff was terminated in close temporal proximity to her concerns and request for proper compensation (protected activity).²
- 25. Plaintiff was informed her termination was due to a reorganization, implying she was being laid off for a closing of her location. Instead, her location was remodeled and Plaintiff was replaced.
- 26. Plaintiff thus asserts multiple claims herein: (1) unpaid wages and overtime; and (2) unlawful termination from employment for retaliatory reasons. Plaintiff was also terminated

¹ See e.g. Solis v. Min Fang Yang, 345 Fed. Appx. 35 (6th Cir. 2009)(Affirming award of liquidated damages explaining "under the Act, liquidated damages are compensation, not a penalty or punishment, and no special showing is necessary for the awarding of such damages. Rather, they are considered the norm and have even been referred to by this court as mandatory."); Gayle v. Harry's Nurses Registry, Inc., 594 Fed. Appx. 714, 718 (2d Cir. 2014)(Affirming award of liquidated damages explaining there is an automatic "presumption" of liquidated damages and "double damages are the norm, single damages the exception," as the burden to avoid liquidated damages is a "difficult burden."); Haro v. City of Los Angeles, 745 F.3d 1249 (9th Cir. 2014)(Affirming award of liquidated damages explaining they are the "norm" and "mandatory" unless the employer can establish the very "difficult burden" of subjective and objective attempts at FLSA compliance); Chao v. Barbeque Ventures, LLC, 547 F.3d 938, 942 (8th Cir. 2008)(Affirming award of liquidated damages explaining that the employer mistakenly argues its non-compliance was not willful, misunderstanding the high burden to show affirmative steps of attempted compliance and research of the FLSA and separately that its diligence and belief in non-payment of overtime was also objectively reasonable.); Chao v. Hotel Oasis, Inc., 493 F.3d 26 (1st Cir. 2007)(Affirming award of liquidated damages explaining that they will always be considered the "norm" in FLSA cases); Lockwood v. Prince George's County, 2000 U.S. App. LEXIS 15302 (4th Cir. 2000)(Affirming award of liquidated damages explaining they are the "norm" and that an employer may not take an ostrich-like approach and refuse to research its obligations under the FLSA and to objectively explain why it failed to comply with the FLSA); Uphoff v. Elegant Bath, Ltd., 176 F.3d 399 (7th Cir. 1999)(Reversing the district court for not awarding liquidated damages, as doubling unpaid overtime is the rule, not an exception); Nero v. Industrial Molding Corp., 167 F.3d 921 (5th Cir. 1999)(Affirming award of liquidated damages, as there is a presumption of entitlement to liquidated damages which are the norm).

² See Kasten v. Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp., 563 U.S. 1, 8, 131 S. Ct. 1325, 1331 (2011)(verbal complaints of unpaid overtime are protected activity under the FLSA prohibiting retaliation)

right before she was to get a pay increase as previously discussed and other entitlements demonstrating clear animosity for her prior protected activities.

27. Defendant Snyder personally oversaw operations, was a high-level manager and owner, condoned and perpetuated unlawful pay to employees and evaded wage or overtime obligations. Defendant Snyder was aware of such violations, caused such violations, and exercised full control over the illegal schemes as aforesaid. She is thus also personally liable for such claims herein, as well as for the retaliatory termination of Plaintiff.³

Count I <u>Violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA")</u> (Failure to Pay Overtime & Retaliatory Termination) - Against All Defendants -

- 28. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 29. Defendants have and continue to be an enterprise and employer under the FLSA, and Defendants had a clear responsibility to pay Plaintiff overtime compensation.
- 30. Plaintiff was not properly paid for all owed overtime as explained *supra*. And such actions constitute indefensible violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA").
- 31. Plaintiff was terminated from Defendants because she raised concerns of unpaid overtime with Defendants, which constitutes unlawful termination.

³ See e.g. Haybarger v. Lawrence Cty. Adult Prob. & Parole, 667 F.3d 408, 414 (3d Cir. 2012)(managers and corporate officers exercising control over wages are appropriate defendants under the FLSA and may be individually liable for such violations).

Count II

Violations of the Pennsylvania Minimum Wage Act ("PMWA") (Failure to Pay Overtime Compensation) - Against All Defendants -

- 32. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 33. Plaintiff was not properly paid for all owed overtime as explained supra. And such actions constitute indefensible violations of the Pennsylvania Minimum Wage Act ("PMWA"), also permitting individual liability.

Count III

Violations of the Pennsylvania Wage & Collection Law ("PWCL") (Failure to Pay Full Wage(s) Owed) - Against All Defendants -

- 34. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 35. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that she was not properly paid for all time worked through her 40 hour workweeks including for breaks, for improper deductions, and for off-the clock work.
- 36. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff her full wages for her first 40 hours of work in several weeks even where Plaintiff worked additional time constitutes a violation of the PWCL.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

- A. Defendants are to promulgate and adhere to a policy prohibiting wage and overtime and wage violations;
- B. Defendants are to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for

Defendants' wrongful actions, including but not limited to all owed wages, overtime, and other applicable compensation;

- C. Plaintiff is to be awarded actual damages to which he legally entitled beyond those already specified herein;
- D. Plaintiff is to be awarded punitive or liquidated damages as permitted by applicable law;
- E. Plaintiff is to be accorded other equitable relief as the Court deems just, proper, and appropriate;
- F. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and a reasonable attorney's fees if permitted by applicable law; and
 - G. Plaintiff is permitted to have a trial by jury.

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

Ari R. Karpf, Esquire

3331 Street Road

Building 2, Suite 128

Bensalem, PA 19020

Dated: January **22,2**019 (215) 639-0801

Exhibit A

MAIN STREET FINANCIAL PARTNERS LLC

PAYROLL VOUCHER

CO. NO. 17812

GILBERTSVILLE PA 19525 DEPT NO EMPLINO EMPLOYEE NAME

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PAY STATEMENT

PLEASE VERIFY YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND FEDERAL STATUS.

MAIN STREET FINANCIAL PARTNERS LLC

PAYROLL VOUCHER

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PAY STATEMENT

MAIN STREET FINANCIAL PARTNERS LLC

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CO. NO. 17812

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PAY STATEMENT

Exhibit B

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Total Hours 91.12

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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CIVIL ACTION

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Chirstine Lane

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the court. (See rever	o as complex and i	hat need spe	acks (a) through (d) that are cial or intense management by ed explanation of special	` `
management cases.)			•	()
(f) Standard Managemer	nt - Cases that do	not fall into a	my one of the other tracks.	(X)
1/22/2019	6		Plaintiff .	
Date	Attorney	-at-law	Attorney for	
(215) 639-0801	(215) 639-4	1970	akarpf@karpf-law.com	
<u>Felephone</u>	FAX Nu	mber	E-Mail Address	
City ECO 1 DIGG	,			,

(Clv. 660) 10/02

Case 5:19-cv-00290-MAK Document 1 Filed 01/22/19 Page 18 of 19 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: 1475 Rupert Road, Pottstown, PA 19464
Address of Defendant: 1012 E. Philadelphia Avenue, Gilbertsville, PA 19525
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendants place of business
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:
Case Number: Judge: Date Terminated:
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any of the following questions:
Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit Yes No X pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights Yes No X
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case this court except as noted above.
DATE: 1/22/2019 ARK2484 / 91538 Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney 1.D. # (if applicable)
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)
A. Federal Question Cases: B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:
1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts 2. FELA 3. Jones Act-Personal Injury 4. Antitrust 5. Patent 6. Labor-Management Relations 7. Civil Rights 8. Habeas Corpus 9. Securities Act(s) Cases 10. Social Security Review Cases 11. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 22. Airplane Personal Injury 33. Assault, Defamation 44. Marine Personal Injury 55. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 66. Other Personal Injury 77. Products Liability 88. Products Liability 89. Securities Act(s) Cases 10. Social Security Review Cases 11. All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify): 12. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 13. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 14. Airplane Personal Injury 15. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 16. Other Personal Injury 17. Products Liability 18. Products Liability 19. Asbestos 10. Social Security Review Cases 11. All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify): 11. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 12. Airplane Personal Injury 30. Assault, Defamation 41. Marine Personal Injury 42. Airplane Personal Injury 43. Assault, Defamation 44. Marine Personal Injury 55. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 66. Other Personal Injury 77. Products Liability 88. Products Liability 89. Assault, Defamation 90. Other Personal Injury 19. Assault, Defamation 10. Marine Personal Injury 10. Assault, Defamation 10. Marine Personal Injury 10. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 10. Assault, Defamation 11. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 12. Airplane Personal Injury 13. Assault, Defamation 14. Marine Personal Injury 15. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 16. Other Personal Injury 17. Products Liability 18. Products Liability 19. Products
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION
(The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)
I, Ari R. Karpf , counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify:
Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs:
Relief other than monetary damages is sought.
DATE: 1/22/2019 ARK2484 / 91538 Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)
NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON MEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

purpose of initiating the civil d	ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCT	TONS ON NEXT PAGE OF			
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS ELIZABETH SNYDER, ET AL.		
LANE, CHRISTINE			ELIZABETH SNY	DEK, ET AL.	
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Montgomery (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.		
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A Karpf, Karpf & Cerutti, I Suite 128, Bensalem, PA	P.C.; 3331 Street Road	i, Two Greenwood	Attomeys (If Known) Square, aw.com		
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in Oi	ne Box Only)		RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff			(For Diversity Cases Only) p Citizen of This State	TF DEF 1 I Incorporated <i>or</i> Pri of Business In	
2 U.S. Government Defendant	4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenshi	p of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	5- 2- 4	Another State
			Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 3 Foreign Nation	6 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT		ly) RTS = 1	- Tordeneuringename		of Suit Code Descriptions. OTHER STATUTES
110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 240 Torts to Land 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations	PERSONAL INJURY 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 385 Property Damage 70 Sample Personal Property Damage 535 Property Damage 70 Other Fraud 71 Truth in Lending 72 Sample Personal Property Damage 73 Sample Personal Product Liability PRISONER PETITION Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Othe 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	TY UABOR TY UABOR TO 720 Labor/Management Relations 740 Railway Labor Act 751 Family and Medical Leave Act 790 Other Labor Litigation 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION 6 462 Naturalization Application	422 Appeal 28 USC 158 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTYRIGHTS 320 Copyrights 830 Patent 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application 840 Trademark 80CIAESECURITY 861 HIA (1395ff) 862 Black Lung (923) 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) 864 SSID Title XVI 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 0 400 State Reapportionment
	in One Box Only) cmoved from 0 3 ate Court	Remanded from Appellate Court		ferred from 0 6 Multidiser District Litigation Transfe	on - Litigation -
	IFLSA (29USC20	atute under which you ar	re filing (Do not cite jurisdictional sta	tutes unless diversity).	
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Brief description of ca		ble state law(s).		
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.			DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: X Yes 'No		
VIII. RELATED CAS IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER _	
1/22/2019	······································	SIGNATURE OF AT	ORNEY OF RECORD		
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY					
RECEIPT# A	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP	JUDGE	MAG. J	UDGE
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